

Birth Defect Fact Sheet

Birth Defect Research for Children

Psoriasis

What is Psoriasis in Children?

Psoriasis is an inflammatory skin disorder. In children, there are two forms of psoriasis:

- Plaque psoriasis. This condition is often seen in toddlers as a raised, red skin lesion that is covered with a silvery white scale. It is most commonly found on the elbows, knees, scalp and lower back.
- Guttate psoriasis. A type of psoriasis that appears as small, red dot-like lesions usually on the trunk or limbs.



**BIRTH DEFECT RESEARCH
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Psoriasis



What causes Psoriasis in Children?

Normal skin cells develop and shed every 28 to 30 days. In children with psoriasis, the skin cells in the areas that are affected develop every 3-4 days. The raised, scaly-looking lesions are actually a buildup of skin and the redness is caused by extra blood accumulating in this area.

Although the cause of this rapid generation of skin cells is not known, research suggests that this is triggered by the immune system. There also seems to be a genetic predisposition in some cases. About a third of children with psoriasis have a least one family member who also has the disorder.

Guttate psoriasis has also been linked to childhood illness like a cold, chicken pox, tonsillitis and/or strep throat.

How is Childhood Psoriasis Diagnosed?

Sometimes psoriasis is confused with childhood eczema, but your doctor can tell the difference by a careful examination of your child's skin. Psoriasis is more red and scaly and looks worse than eczema which is pink and rougher in texture. If your child's condition is severe, your doctor may refer you to a dermatologist.

How is Childhood Psoriasis Treated?

Childhood psoriasis is not contagious and will not spread all over your child's body. But it can be itchy and uncomfortable. Remedies can include adding soothing oil to your child's bathwater and lathering on a good moisturizer after bathing.

A safe and effective topical medication may also be used to relieve discomfort.

More serious cases of psoriasis may be treated with light therapy or oral medication that may include antihistamines to control itching and/or antibiotics if the rash has become infected.

Will Psoriasis go Away as My Child Gets Older?

Psoriasis is usually a chronic disorder with cycles of flaring up and then settling down. There are even times when psoriasis may go into remission altogether but it can return. Some causes of psoriasis flares include stress, cold and dry weather, infections (ear aches, strep, recurring tonsillitis), certain medications and cuts or bruises (injured skin may trigger a psoriasis outbreak in that area.) Your doctor can help you manage your child's flares of psoriasis.

Fact Sheet by:

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